

Minutes of General Membership Meeting held on Tuesday, September 7, 1971, at N.J. Bell Telephone Co., Vail Hall, 540 Broad Street, Newark, New Jersey.

ATTENDEES:

Roland E. Stewart - Exec. Director  
 Ruth McClain - Co-Chairman  
 Marshall Wolf - Co-Chairman  
 Barbara Parker  
 Andrew Washington  
 Gary H. Lewis  
 George Wibecan  
 H.M. Groce  
 R. B. Thiel  
 S. S. Bergen  
 A. E. Foley  
 H. J. Hautau  
 C.R. O'Connor  
 Ernest Bridges  
 Alford H. Vaughn  
 William Kosky  
 Samuel Jones  
 Ronnie Harris  
 Edwin Bess  
 Thomas Mann  
 Jane Cassidy  
 Bill Wilson  
 Ralph Geller  
 Martin L. Erwin  
 F.J. Frerighs  
 Marie Gonzalez  
 John S. Clarkson  
 John Maguire  
 William Hoffman  
 Royo T. Boone  
 Elsie H. Wilson  
 Julius Foster  
 Henry Boardman  
 Thomas A. Boykin  
 Ellen Rosner  
 Leslie Rupprecht  
 Gustav Henningburg  
 Horace H. Hunt  
 Anne M. Calloway  
 Harry Wheeler  
 Richard Proctor

B.I.C.C.  
 Greater Newark Urban Coalition  
 National Newark & Essex Bank  
 B.I.C.C.  
 Newark Community Representative  
 Sealand Service - Port Elizabeth  
 Prudential Insurance Company  
 College of Medicine & Dentistry  
 New Jersey Blue Cross  
 College of Medicine & Dentistry  
 College of Medicine & Dentistry  
 Weston Instruments  
 Rutgers University  
 General Electric Co.  
 B.I.C.C.  
 RCA Corporation  
 Division of Public Welfare  
 B.I.C.C.  
 Bumbersgers  
 Urban League of Essex County  
 New Jersey Bell Telephone  
 New Jersey Bell Telephone  
 N.J. State Employment & Training Serv.  
 Newark Skills Center  
 Fireman's Fund America  
 Newark Human Rights Commission  
 Mutual Benefit Life Insurance  
 Public Service Gas & Electric  
 Fidelity Union Trust  
 Fairchild - Dumont Electron Tubes  
 Community  
 Western Electric - Newark  
 Western Electric - Kearny  
 B.I.C.C.  
 B.I.C.C.  
 Newark Public Library  
 Greater Newark Urban Coalition  
 Ecumenical Ministry  
 B.I.C.C.  
 City Hall  
 Model Cities

Meeting was called to order by co-chairman Ruth McClain, with self introduction of all present. The co-chairman announced the theme of the meeting, "Has BIOC Lived Up To Its Potential", and introduced Mr. Harry Wheeler, and Mr. Andrew Washington, the panel for BIOC.

The course runs 8 weeks, and will consist of surveying, chart and map making, blue-print and scale reading, etc. Mr. Bowser said ICBO is in the process of taking a survey of where the Black man can take advantage of green power in the construction trades. The association has seen 10 good minority contractors grow over the last 2 years. To enter the course the applicant must be over 18, be better than average in English and math. Mr. Bowser said the association is looking for leaders, not people to handle the tools, but people to supervise. Mr. Wheeler called the Urban Contractors program unique and said it brings something new to the arena.

The topic "Has BICC Lived Up To Its Potential" was then turned over to the panel. Mr. Andrew Washington, Director of the Multi Cultural Center of Brookdale Community College, a former Newark resident and school teacher, began with "Is BICC a Viable Organization", and "BICC Potentials vs Accomplishments." Mr. Washington stated that BICC has failed to develop its potential as a possible change agent for the Greater Newark community. He had he said, asked at a BICC meeting sometime ago, "What Is BICC's True Function", and was never answered adequately. Mr. Washington said BICC's involvement has been minimal in urban affairs. That in housing, health, and education plus police protection, the unfilled needs of Newark are partially due to the indifference of the million dollar corporations in Newark. He stated that many problems in Newark could be alleviated by companies use of their corporate wealth and political influence. Mr. Washington remarked that indifference has caused ruined lives, devastated communities, and intolerable living conditions. He said Uncle Tom jobs for Blacks have been created in companies, and that the jobs are only titles. Mr. Washington said BICC could be more effective if it had a sincere commitment from the business community, and that the lack of community participation shows that BICC has not lived up to its potential. He said there was also a lack of overall coordination.

Mr. Wheeler addressed himself to the question of BICC's potential by saying "Hell no BICC hasn't lived up to its potential, and ain't going to reach it." He replied, if BICC is ever going to be a change agency we have to first take a look at ourselves, and the structure we represent. He stated BICC has done some things, but far too little. Mr. Wheeler remarked that the people who come to the BICC meetings are well meaning, but when the issues are hot and are laid on the table, they have to be taken back to somebody else, and then worked up through the process, because somebody else has to make the final decisions. Mr. Wheeler asked the members to be honest with themselves, and if their participation with BICC was just a farce or charade, to resign and let somebody else take over. Even if it meant the BICC membership would be five or less, at least these few could make an effort to pull it together. In ending Mr. Wheeler said, if there is ever to be a change, everybody involved has got to start being honest with himself, and until then BICC will never live up to or reach its potential.

Mr. Boardman stated in the early days BICC had something cooking. The community told the business community what the problems were, and they didn't let up. There was always some pressure, and committees had to function because they had to answer to somebody. But somehow the jobs were taken more and more away from the committees, and they backed off. Mr. Boardman said the business community should be challenged more to be more productive.

Gustav Heningburg of the Urban Coalition stated, "We're in a circular process that guarantees the failure of agencies such as BICC. There has been a withdrawal of resources both human and financial, and agencies are fighting over these remaining resources."

Mrs. McClain extended welcomes to guest from N.J.C.M.D., Division of Public Welfare and the Acting Director of New Careers. She also announced the Urban Classic football game between Morgan State College and Rutgers University, reporting the affair as being a worthwhile investment for recreation for inter-city young people.

The co-chairman informed the membership of the joy she had received in sharing the BICC meetings with them, noting that her six years of coming to sessions and functioning were coming to an end, due to a fellowship she had received to attend Massachusetts Institute of Technology, under a Whitney Young Fellowship. She told the members that her co-chairmanship was being turned over to Mr. Richard Proctor, who would finish out her term in office. The BICC gavel was turned over to Mr. Proctor, who accepted and made his acknowledgments. Congratulations were extended. The Executive Director was then called upon to make his report.

Mr. Stewart began his report by telling of the BICC/Mutual Benefit Clerical Class which had graduated August 15th at the Mutual Benefit Home Office. The director commended Mr. John Clarkson, and Mutual for their repeated contribution to the Newark community and asked him to make a few remarks concerning the class. Mr. Clarkson reported that Mutual had been conducting classes for the last four years like other companies have using people selected and counseled by BICC. Mutual provides the training area, purchases the equipment, pays the teachers salary and other expenses, and checks in every now and then to see how things are going. He said if other companies want to start up a class, Mutual would be more than happy to give advice and help. Mr. Stewart said Mutual was to be commended for its efforts as well as Pru, N.J. Bell, and Rutgers who also have run clerical classes for BICC.

The Director went on to tell of a "ringer" BICC has in its employ. He told the members of the qualities, capabilities and expertise of this "ringer". How she can pass for either race, put herself into any category, such as hardcore, or sophisticated applicant applying for a job. He told how this "ringer" had been sent out to some member companies, and rejected as not being able to qualify. A "ringer" who has a college degree and a year in law school but rejected from the job of telephone information clerk. Mr. Stewart said this makes one wonder about the hiring practices of some companies, how we should re-evaluate and re-access criteria for employment, find out where we've been and where we're going now, and ask are we excluding people from employment systematically rather than including people for employment.

Mr. Stewart reported that 5,000 letters had been sent out to employers, soliciting jobs, and he was encouraged by the response. The Director said he was hopeful of processing 1200 people for jobs by April of next year. He also stated that BICC has offered to help the mayor in his Public Employment Program.

Mrs. McClain called on Mr. Hamilton Bowser of the Urban Contractors Association to tell a little something about his program.

Mr. Bowser reported his program was educational, somewhat similar to the Industrial Arts Curriculum Project. It is one of the few Black sponsored programs not asking for money for support, and consists of 14 Black contractors. The association was organized two years ago, and has meetings once a month. The programs goal is education of its members, and improvement of the construction business as a whole, as it affects Blacks. The program has stiff criteria for joining. It requires 2 years in business, having an accountant and an attorney, a minimum of 3 employees, and a reputation for completing the job. The association will be expanding to about 20 members soon, all from the Northern part of the state. The association will be selecting 4 boys whose tuition will be paid to attend night school at Newark College of Engineering, and Union Vocational School. The program has 122 applicants.

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Mr. Henningburg said anybody not aware of this withdrawal is not being honest with himself. The question here the Coalition President said should be, "Have we done enough, and do we have enough resources to do enough?" Mr. Henningburg remarked, "BICC members must go to bat for its existence and survival, so that it can develop and keep its potential strength as a change agent."

Mr. Wheeler made the comment that "What BICC needs is the dedicated help of everybody, each doing his thing individually, and pulling together collectively."

Mr. Henningburg related that a director spending most of his time trying to find resources, and a staff spending time trying to survive cannot serve the community. He said, "BICC is fighting for its survival, not service." He asserted that BICC's survival lies within the Chamber, that the Chamber decides at what level BICC should be funded. He indicated, BICC should decide its own financial needs, and that BICC knows what its needs are, and should get its point across to the Chamber. Mr. Henningburg said business is responsible for the survival of the organization. Mr. Washington stated that members representing companies should go to their superiors requesting pledges to help insure BICC's survival, and that the first priority right now was indeed survival.

Mr. Hank Hautau of Weston Instruments told the membership as the result of a previous BICC meeting he had informed his superior that someone from the BICC would be approaching their company in reference to financial support, but the request was never made.

In answer to Mr. Hautau, Mrs. McClain informed him that the solicitation for funds at that time were for satellite programs, to keep them going, and once the budgeted amount was attained, no other companies were approached. The solicitation for funds then was not for the over-all funding of BICC.

Mr. Gross of the N.J.C.M.D., answered Mr. Washington's request for pledges by saying, he could not pledge money because he was only one of the policy makers at the college. But he could pledge their time, and if BICC is in trouble from the stand point of getting money, he would like to be a part of that process, by being a mouth to open some doors, or things of that sort. That if in fact BICC is in trouble, and if this is the time to put up, he had no money to give but pledged the energies of his agency and office.

It was then proposed that a group from the BICC Executive Committee sit down with the Executive Committee of the Chamber to discuss BICC's future, financially. Mr. Wolf in answering said, the committee would have the pleasure of doing so in November.

At the end of the meeting Mr. Proctor thanked Mrs. McClain for the fine job she had done as co-chairman, and that she deserved a lot of credit. Mr. McClain thanked Mr. Wheeler, and Mr. Washington, plus the other speakers for their presentations, and said, if anyone in the audience had available time to devote to BICC, please contact Mr. Richard Proctor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Barbara Parker, Secretary